

CINEMA STUDIES

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The Society for Film History Research was formed in January, 1959, with the object of encouraging historical research into all aspects of the cinematograph, both in the British Isles and abroad.

It is in close co-operation with the National Film Archive and other archives abroad.

Membership is open to all who are interested in film history research, wherever they may live, and costs £1 per year, beginning in January. Members receive copies of this Journal, a Newsletter which appears irregularly approximately every two months, and occasional publications in the form of pamphlets or monographs. Occasional lectures are arranged in London, and it is hoped that members in other parts of Britain will eventually form local groups.

CINEMA STUDIES

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EDITORIAL

The Society for Film History Research was founded in January, 1959, on the initiative of Ernest Lindgren, Curator of the National Film Archive, stimulated by the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film and its Bureau International de Recherche Historique Cinématographique. So far as we know, apart from the research group formed in the Netherlands and described in this issue, we are the only organisation concerned with historical research into the cinema in all its aspects, as opposed to the collection and preservation of material which is the function of the film archive.

That such a Society should be first formed in Britain is appropriate, for if one accepts Sadoul's judgement the British film industry led the world during the cinema's first decade. It is also, however, a sore necessity. For the standard of serious writing on the cinema in this country is lamentable. We have the excellent three volume work on the early British cinema by Rachael Low. But that apart, there has been nothing published in this country with enough substance to satisfy any test of scholarship. The most noteworthy names, Manvell, Lindgren, Rotha, provide in their books useful signposts for the beginner, but they do not pretend to cover their fields exhaustively. Indeed it would be unreasonable to expect them to do so, for none of the groundwork has yet been laid.

There is still no adequate biography of a single British film-maker; the only biography of any pretensions that has yet been published in England is Marie Seton's of Eisenstein. Apart from Dr. Low, there has been no investigation of the early British film industry, the development from fairground and music-hall to penny gaff and picture palace, the building up of a distributing and exhibiting organisation which became the most efficient in the world during the Edwardian decade. And even Rachael Low stopped short in 1918. There is nothing about the British film industry in the twenties and thirties. Was it really so bad that it is not worth writing about? It still managed to produce Hitchcock and Asquith and to provide a field for the flamboyance of Korda. Why? and how? What was the effect of the quota Act of 1927? And what about the quality of the films produced in this country? How was it that the French firms of Pathé and Gaumont acquired such a strong hold before the Great War? How was the British film industry affected by the types of film being produced in France, in Italy, in Sweden, in America? What scope was there for experiment and off-beat

productions ? or was the industry even then so strongly organised that these had no chance ? Why has the British film industry after its first brief burst of energy, always been so insipid and unadventurous ? is this even true ? What was the influence of J. Arthur Rank's incursion into the production and distribution of films ? These are all vital questions which must receive some study before we can hope to reach any understanding of the cinema in Great Britain.

The research worker in this country is worse off than his counterpart in such a country as France, for there is here a great dearth of secondary material. Not only has there been little published of scholarly nature ; practically nothing serious is published even on the contemporary cinema. In Paris one can find a host of little books and monographs on all aspects of the current cinema. A new movement produces a crop of studies of films, directors, trend theories, bees in bonnets. But all London can do is to suppose one serious periodical, which can afford, except on rare occasion to appear only quarterly ; and which has to include among its a too few pages an adequate review of current film releases, articles on social and aesthetic trends of the day, a coverage of the major trends in world film-making, and a summary of festival offerings as well as other more individual articles. Of course it cannot do it. From *Close-up* through *Sequence* to *Sight and Sound* the student can find rough guidance but little substantial help. He must do all his digging in the field himself.

It is the purpose of this Journal, and of this Society, to encourage the basic research necessary to enable the history of the cinema especially in Britain, to be adequately written. And because the *cinémane* is enthusiastic about the cinema everywhere, and in any case the cinema cannot be neatly compartmented in national bundles, we are concerned with the history of the cinema abroad as well.

The articles in this first issue all treat of some aspect of film history research. With only a slight background of research behind us it is important to develop a methodology, to think very carefully what we are trying to do and how to set about it. Jonkheer de Vries describes how his own research group has worked out a basic scheme which may serve as a framework for its future activities and he states that this outline is bound to become modified as the research proceeds. The same will inevitably happen with us. We shall discover which gaps in our knowledge are important, which less so ; where we must concentrate our efforts, where we can relax for a while. At the same time we shall discover what rules need to be followed, what pitfalls there are for the unwary, how apparently sound judgements can be utterly falsified because of some innocuous omission which was not considered of sufficient importance. And as the work goes on there will be more and more material to provide cross-check. Excuses for inaccuracy will become fewer, and our standards of criticism will become sounder, because they will be securely based.

Only then shall we be able to talk about British film historians.

FILM ARCHIVES

By ERNEST LINDGREN*

One of the most remarkable film developments since the War has been the spread throughout the world of the film archive movement. Because the people who run them seldom have the aptitude, time or resources to publicise their work, it is a development which has proceeded almost unnoticed. "Film archive" is not altogether satisfactory title; one wonders whether it should not be "archives" in the plural, but even then it might be misleading; "film museum" is also ambiguous (it might mean a collection of film apparatus) although the archive in Copenhagen in fact calls itself the Danish Film Museum. France is able to use the convenient word "cinémathèque," on the analogy of "bibliothèque," (whence Italian "cineteca," Spanish "filmoteca," Portuguese "cinemateca," Jugoslav "kinoteka," etc.). Whatever they are called, all these bodies have the same fundamental aim, namely to collect the best and most important films in the history of the cinema, as well as any related material concerning them (stills, set designs, scripts, books, etc.), in order to preserve them and to make them available for study. Given this common purpose, however, they differ considerably in size, status, finance, and in the particular aspects of their work to which they give emphasis (for none of them is yet big enough to extend itself with equal competence over the whole field).

Virtually all of them are members of the International Federation of Film Archives, which has its headquarters in Paris. The Federation was founded in 1938 jointly by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library of New York, the Cinémathèque Française, the Berlin Reichsfilmarchiv and the National Film Archive of London. By 1945 the Reichsfilmarchiv had disappeared in the collapse of Germany, but the remaining three came together again in 1946, since when the Federation has grown to a total membership of thirty-eight archives, most of them created since the War.

The film archives obtain the great bulk of their collections, directly or indirectly, from the film industry, and they receive them on trust, without rights of any kind. The legal ownership, and the legal control, remains entirely with the companies owning or disposing of the copyright. This fact is sometimes overlooked by those who seek the aid of the film archives, but it cannot be too often or too heavily emphasised. Unless special permission is obtained, the archives cannot make use of their films for any other purpose than preservation and private study on their own premises by *bona-fide* students. Any archive which disregarded this restriction would cease to receive films, and its function as an archive would come to an end.

Methods and disciplines of preservation vary. The National Film Archive, under an expert Technical Advisory Committee, has devoted special attention to this aspect, and its procedure is regarded by many others as a model. Its preservation copies, even if positive, are never projected (which would cause measurable wear). If projection is required, duplicates must be made, and this, of course, is expensive. Individual students, however, may obtain permission to examine the preservation copies directly on a table viewer,

* B.A., F.B.K.S., Curator of the National Film Archive, London.

under staff supervision; since the staff is insufficient, this is at present a privilege which can only be extended in special circumstances.

For the purposes of the research student, the most important part of any film archive is its catalogue. Again this varies in method and thoroughness as between one archive and another; again, it is a field in which the National Film Archive has set a lead. Film cataloguing is a subject on which many pages could be (and have been) written. Briefly, the key source of reference in any catalogue is the main entry card, which is filed under the original title of the film (in the language of the country of origin if it is a foreign film), and which carries an accurate record of all the essential data, production credits, cast list, summary of content, references to press reviews or articles, and the like. These cards are filed under the title in alphabetical sequence. Often, however, the student may be searching not for a specific film under its title, but for the films of a particular director or star, or films on certain themes or subjects. For this purpose a card index to the main catalogue entries is maintained. In London the subject index is arranged under the Universal Decimal Classification, which has the convenience of bringing related subjects together; names of production staff and actors are alphabetically indexed. The index cards carry references to the appropriate films, so that one can refer back to the main entry card, and if necessary to the film itself in the storage vaults.

Although films themselves form the basic collection of all film archives, the other material which they hold, books, stills, scripts, programmes, set designs and the like are of almost equal value to the research student. The National Film Archive has for many years built up a collection of stills, numbering nearly two hundred thousand; the recent merging of the Film Institute's Book Library and Information Department with the Archive was a notable step forward in its development, identifying its structure more closely with those of film archives abroad.

Selection is a vital part of acquisition, although few people think of it as such. Because resources are limited, it is vital that they be devoted to the right films, for otherwise the wrong ones might keep the right ones out. In most film archives selection is exercised by the staff, and ultimately by the director or curator, and where the archive is concerned solely with the history of film art, this is not too difficult. The National Film Archive, however, is also concerned with films as historical records and in this context it has recently embraced television films also; the staff are therefore assisted by three selection committees of outside experts (a General Committee, a History Committee and a Science Committee) each of which meets six times a year.

One of the chief difficulties under which these committees operate, it may be noted in passing, is that they are selecting to meet a future and unspecified demand, and until substantial research has been done, and until research workers are sufficient in numbers and organisation to voice their needs, the National Film Archive's Committees must, to some extent, be groping in the dark.

It will be gathered, I hope, from this brief summary, that whatever difficulties film archives may have in making their collections available to a wider public, there are no restrictions on private research, and *bona-fide* research workers will always be welcomed.

and assisted within the limits of accommodation and staff available. Published research is in the archive's interest because it demonstrates that its work is necessary and is used, and because it encourages others to use it. While resources remain limited, the term "bona-fide" has to be interpreted fairly rigorously. Someone who is preparing a serious and valuable publication already commissioned, must have precedence, for example, over someone who is exploring a quiet backwater of film history solely for his own amusement and edification.

It seldom happens that any one archive has all the source materials for a given piece of research; this is where membership of the International Federation of Film Archives, and the possibility of exchanges with other members, can be of immense help. Sometimes, it may even be necessary for the research student to travel to another archive and spend some time working there; such exchanges and visits are normal in any other field of scholarship, and will doubtless become so in this one as organisation develops and money is made available. In the hope that it may be of interest to those interested in film research, I am attaching, as an appendix to this article, a list of the names and addresses of film archives overseas, taken from the International Federation's Handbook. (They are in alphabetical order according to the French names of their respective countries.)

Members of the International Federation of Film Archives

ARGENTINE

Cinemateca Argentina,
Buenos Aires,
Corrientes 1296, Esc. 40.

AUSTRALIA

Commonwealth National
Library Film Division,
Canberra, A.C.T.

AUSTRIA

Osterreichisches Filmarchiv,
Wien I,
Renngasse 20.

BELGIUM

Cinémathèque de Belgique,
Brussels,
Palais des Beaux-Arts,
Entrée Ravenstein.

BRAZIL

Cinemateca Brasileira,
Caixa Postale 12.900,
Sao Paulo.

BULGARIA

Bulgarian Film Archives,
Todor Strachimirov 2,
Sofia.

CANADA

Canadian Film Institute,
Archive Committee,
1762 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa 3,
Ontario, Canada.

CHINA

Chinese Film Archive,
Peking,
Hsi Chiao Min Hsiang 84.
(Corresponding member).

COLOMBIA

Filmoteca Colombiana,
Bogotá,
Avenida Jimenez de Quesada
No. 8-60.

DENMARK

The Danish Film Museum,
Copenhagen,
Vestergade 27.

EGYPT

Egyptian Film Archive,
Department of Cinema
Culture,
Arts Administration,
27 Abdel Khalek Saroit St.,
Cairo.

SPAIN

Filmoteca Nacional de
España,
Madrid,
Joaquin Costa 43.

FINLAND

The Finnish Film Museum,
Helsinki,
Mikonkatu 13 G 143.

FRANCE

Cinémathèque Française,
82 rue de Courcelles,
Paris 8e.

GREAT BRITAIN

The National Film Archive,
164 Shaftesbury Avenue,
London, W.C.2.

HUNGARY

Magyar Allami Filmarchivum,
Institute of Theatre & Film,
Budapest XIV,
Vorosilov ut 97.

IRAN

Kanune o Namayesh Film,
Teheran,
482 Avenue Ferdosi.

ITALY

Cineteca Italiana,
Milano,
Villa Reale,
Via Palestro 16.

Cineteca Nazionale,
Centro Sperimentale di
Cinematografia,
Roma,
Via Tuscolana.

Museo del Cinema,
Palazzo Chiablese,
Torino,
Piazza San Giovanni 2.

JAPAN

National Film Archive,
National Museum of
Modern Art,
Tokyo,
Kyobashi Chuo Ku.

MOROCCO

Cinémathèque du Maroc,
Rabat,
85 rue Henri-Popp.

NORWAY

The Norwegian Film Institute,
Oslo,
Kingosgate 22.

HOLLAND

Nederlands Filmmuseum,
Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam Z,
Paulus Potterstraat 13.

PERU

Cinemateca del Peru,
Avenida Dos de Mayo 790,
App. 1761,
San Isidro,
Lima.

POLAND

Centralne Archiwum
Filmowe,
Warszawa,
U1 Pulawska 61.

PORTRUGAL

Cinemateca Nacional,
Palacio Foz,
Lisbon,
Restauradores.

**GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC**

Staatliches Filmarchiv,
Berlin No. 55,
Goethestrasse 7.

**GERMAN FEDERAL
REPUBLIC**

Deutsches Filmarchiv e.v.,
Wiesbaden-Biebrich,
Schloss.

SWEDEN

Filmhistoriska Samlingarna,
Tekniska Museet,
Stockholm O.

SWITZERLAND

Cinémathèque Suisse,
Lausanne,
12 Place de la Cathédrale.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Ceskoslovenská Filmotéka,
Praha XI,
Malesická 6.

U.S.S.R.

Gosfilmofond,
p.o. Bielie-Stolbi,
Moscow Oblast.

URUGUAY

Cinemateca Urugaya,
Montevideo,
Plaza Independencia 838
Esc. 14.

S.O.D.R.E.
(Servicio Oficial de difusion
Radio electricita),
Cine arte,
Montevideo,
Andes y Mercedes.

U.S.A.

The Museum of Modern
Art Film Library,
11 West 53rd Street,
New York 19,
N.Y.

George Eastman House,
900 East Avenue,
Rochester 7,
N.Y.

JUGOSLAVIA

Jugoslovenska Kinoteka,
Beograd,
Knez Mihailovna 19.

FILM-RESEARCH IN THE NETHERLANDS

By JAN DE VAAL*

Thanks to the initiative of the Bureau International de Recherche Historique Cinématographique of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film, which has its head office in Paris, national research committees have already been inaugurated in several countries, mostly under the auspices or as a department of the national film museum (or archive). In those countries the very difficult but most thankful task of historical film research has started.

This has happened recently in England and also in Holland, where a committee of film historians, film critics and technicians is studying the first problems and starting a gigantic task.

In Holland, this committee was inaugurated as a department of, and with the help from, the Netherlands Filmmuseum, which brought together a small group of people who are willing, through their great interest, to start the work in this field, which is completely new for Holland.

After several working-meetings and after elaborating definite projects, this kernel-group will make use of the documentation material which the Netherlands Filmmuseum has collected in the course of the years, and which during the last years has been considerably enlarged, such as old film weeklies, photos, posters and last, but not least, old films.

It has hitherto appeared most difficult to find a starting point for this country. Although there is enough material to start some-

* Director of the Nederlands Filmmuseum.

where, it will be clear that working according to a system is more desirable and, in the long run, more effective.

So the Netherlands research committee has adopted the following working outlines. As the different tasks are divided at the moment, the following subjects will come up for discussion :

1900-1925

- (1) Netherlands film production ;
the Netherlands newsreel ;
- (2) film reviewing and the critic ;
- (3) film distribution ;
- (4) the different short films shown before the feature films in the cinema programmes ;
- (5) shooting and projection techniques ;
- (6) educational and scientific films, travelogues and the documentary film in general ;
- (7) the film business (trade) ;
the Nederlandse Bioscoop-Bond (Cinema Union) ;
censorship ;
film legislation ;
- (8) situation and furnishing of the cinemas ;
number of cinemas ;
number of visitors ;
- (9) propaganda and publicity (methods).

Every member of the committee has one or two tasks in this field. On the basis of the material supplied by the Netherlands Filmmuseum, the members of the committee can start the research work and meanwhile the Filmmuseum regularly gets new collections of material and goes on searching for new (old) sources of supply. In the autumn there will be a meeting of the members again and the first reports will appear. It is expected that many will express new wishes, mostly concerning the investigation of sources, discovered by the research. These sources, which possibly still exist somewhere in the Netherlands, will only be mentioned in writing and it will indeed be the task of the Filmmuseum to carry out the wishes of the committee and investigate those sources.

Also there will be working-gatherings, whereby old film pioneers will be invited to tell everything they remember from the old days. This will be put on tape and worked out later. In this way after some time—let us say about a year—enough will be discovered, reconstructed and put together, for a first publication, preferably illustrated with the authentic "discovered" photographs and reproduced letters and writings, to be possible.

The committee is convinced that these publications will be not only a great help to the national and international film history research, but that they will open up an interesting and almost forgotten world for a great many people in the historical, the sociological or juridical fields.

Therefore it is very gratifying to know that the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Art and Sciences already shows great interest in this very modest beginning.

During the 12½ years of its existence the Netherlands Filmmuseum has already discovered many sources and collected very much material. This material has first to be put into order and catalogued. Only then can the research workers make use of it.

Therefore it is of the greatest importance that the NFM not only pays great attention to the collecting of old films and preserving them, but also tries its utmost to build up a large documentation centre.

This documentation service, working with such different materials as old and very old weeklies, photographs, posters, folders, press-cuttings, articles, memoirs, letters, publicity material, etc., will need in the coming years a staff of co-operators, who must be able to order and catalogue thousands of items and data in such a way that they form a living archive, out of which everything can be obtained.

The documentation service now has the following divisions :

- I Personalia
- II Films
- III Manifestations
- IV Techniques
- V Miscellaneous.

When the research worker needs to make use of this material, many old periodicals will have to be bound and old curiosa will have to be prepared in such a way that the possibilities of damaging them will be reduced to a minimum.

It is to be hoped that in the near future the national research committees will be able to help each other by exchanging advice to complete each other's tasks. The following may illustrate the possibilities in this field.

In 1922 in Haarlem, which had in those days a very flourishing film industry and which is situated about 20 kilometres from Amsterdam, a film was made, named *The Black Tulip*. The NFM has found a complete copy of this film, which has been preserved and of which the following data are known :

Length : 1760 metres—silent—black and white.

Producers : Hollandia-film, Haarlem, in co-production with an English firm (the Granger-Binger production).

Directors : Maurits Binger and Tony Richardson.

Camera : Feiko Boersma.

Cast : Eduard Verkade, Coen Hissink, Lau Ezerman, Harry Waghalter, Frank Deene and Zoe Palmer.

This appears to be a Netherlands-English co-production (and not the only one from that time!).

As far as we have discovered now, it came out that during the first world war a number of English soldiers who were interned in the Netherlands, formed a stage group, named "The Timbertown Jollies." Their leader was Fred Penley. This dance and stage group played *en travesti* in the films of Maurits Binger, the film pioneer and producer in Haarlem.

His productions were made in the Hollandia Filmstudio, which was situated in Haarlem. In 1919 he established a co-production with an English firm and in this way a couple of Dutch-English films were made. Artists from both countries co-operated. Studio shots were taken in the Hollandia Filmstudio and people shot on location in little villages in the neighbourhood of Haarlem, such as Heemstede and Aerdenhout, but also in the country manor "Duin en Kruidberg" and the ruins of Brederode Castle near Santpoort.

One of these co-productions was *The Black Tulip* (1922). Directors were Maurits Binger and, as we suppose, the father of Sir Ralph Richardson,* well known and very popular in England. Shots were made in Haarlem and The Hague.

This Dutch-English co-operation was very successful and the Press in England, in 1920, wrote about these productions: "The scenery, the beautiful landscape and the enormous arsenal of artists that the Dutch have, is proof that during the years 1914-1918, they didn't sit with their hands in their laps. In the field of film production they have become dangerous competitors with great routine and unequalled improvisation. The Dutch Binger moreover sees fit to charter our best experts for his productions. It is time that an English Binger put the affairs of the English film world in order."

On 17th July, 1924, a heavy fire destroyed the film studio at the Spaarne, a river in the city of Haarlem. This was the end of Hollandia Film, and for the national film production also, the end of "the good old times."

It would be most interesting if not only the research committee of the Netherlands investigated more about this period, but also if England could supply more information about it.

* The father of Sir Ralph Richardson was Arthur Richardson. We are unable to trace further references to this Tony Richardson—Ed.

TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE MOVIES

By LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE*

I

There is in many quarters to-day an assumption that the History of the Moving Picture has been fully written and that there is little to add to what is already known. It is common knowledge that Film Archives have now been in existence for over twenty years in many countries, that many books and histories have been written about the film. All this leads to a certain complacency and to the assumptions I have mentioned.

First of all the Archives started forty years after the cinema was invented. For financial and other reasons the preservation of contemporary films and other related records engaged their attention. What they could salvage from the past they did, but the accessibility of that fragmentary material was still questionable as far as the research student was concerned. Film is not a cheap and readily distributable material. It is small consolation to the student of Cinema in Patagonia to know that the film he wants to refer to for his study is in an Archive in Bessarabia. The truth is that the Film's History is being pieced together very slowly and very painfully and that too little scientific skill is being brought to bear on the assessment of achievements in this medium.

The situation is further complicated by books on the History of the Cinema or biographies of film-makers and personalities. Many of these books have served a useful purpose as pioneers in their field, but too often they have been compiled with the bias and

* Acquisitions Officer to the National Film Archive.

prejudice of their day heavy upon them and they suffer from appalling disabilities which in no way reflect on the value of their makers' researches but merely reflect the limitations under which they worked at the time.

For the film student of to-day the limitations are still great but certainly less than they were twenty years ago. More films have been discovered, shown and written about. Errors of opinion and fact in film books have become more obvious. The studies of contemporary film-makers and film personalities are more considered and certainly better documented. Obviously, because this is a comparatively easier field of research.

To deal with the comedy of René Clair, the realism of de Sica or the Free Cinema of Vigo, or still further to deal in generalisations on Italian Neo-Realism, on the French Avant Garde or similar movements, is to risk the accusation of attempting to be in the contemporary swim. Such is not the mark of sound scholarship or devoted research which one would like to see invoked in the service of the Cinema. The moment the *Zeitgeist* raises its ugly head in scholarship we can well be suspicious of the results. And to-day too many books on the Cinema are merely reproducing each other and creating the uneasy feeling that the History of the Cinema has been emptied of all it has to give.

The truth is that the basic source material of the Cinema and its history have yet to be written. We have nothing comparable for instance to the excellent work of Rachael Low in her *History of the British Film*. The field of Film History from 1895 to the middle twenties has yet to be adequately explored. And what a field ! It was the birth of a new art at a time when the shackles of industrial exploitation were still weak. Film-making was then a real adventure capable of being advanced by one man with enthusiasm and guts. To think that the History of the Cinema can be written in terms of half-a-dozen outstanding figures is the great fallacy of our time.

II

It is not easy to divert the energies of a writer, a collector or mere fan in any particular direction. The initial enthusiasm which begins a project can arise from any number of profound personal emotions or causes. The curiosity of a name, the appeal of a face, a passing reference of praise or blame can dominate man's life. How explain Mauriac's preoccupation with red-headed heroines ? But once an idea has found root then it will grow and develop. What is needed is to set the research student operating within a certain area and then allow his enthusiasms and skills to find their own outlet and development. It is towards the early history of the cinema and particularly towards that of the early film history of the English-speaking peoples that we need to direct the film student of to-day.

It is conceivably in Britain that the English research worker will most readily find immediate scope for his work. A great number of British films exist either in the National Archive or in the hands of private collectors. The scenes of their makers' activities are accessible, the makers of the films or their colleagues may be still alive. Trade journals and newspapers carry their story buried between the pages. Records and documents of all kinds abound. Similarly, the great silent American film needs detailed study. This much maligned and overshadowed phase of cinema is not to

be written off with studies of D. W. Griffith or Erich von Stroheim, of whom, incidentally, there are no adequate or definitive biographies. James Cruze, John S. Robertson, Rex Ingram or Maurice Tourneur, to mention just a few directors, are little more than names attached to one film or maybe two which have survived the ravages of time. And here is where the work of the student and the Film Archivist must interlock. The discovery of the films and the research must inevitably react one on the other. A stimulating study of a director must lead to the search for his films, or the discovery of films and their availability must stimulate study.

III

The making of a film is a human activity and cannot be fully appreciated without the factors of time and circumstance being fully considered. And this raises the need for greater biographical documentation.

In the study of any film personality the most obvious and desirable starting point should be direct access to the films or to as many as it is possible to find. A complete index with full production credits must be built up by reference to Trade Journals, Film Year Books, Popular Film Magazines of the period (and it is only fair to stress here that no source however humble should be overlooked). Sometimes the material will come easily, at other times facts will be assembled the hard way by patient delving. You may find the actors in a particular film but not know the roles they played. You may find the art director but not know who the cameraman was until months afterwards. This is how it goes. Then having pieced your almost complete credits together you suddenly find a source which gives you the complete and accurate credits which you might have got in the first place if you had known of the existence of this particular mine of information.

Outside the more obvious Film Sources one must not neglect the ordinary press. If the person whose story you are pursuing did something of interest it is more than likely that you will locate reviews of his work in say *The Times* or other newspapers. In London for instance the files of this paper can be very readily consulted on microfilm at the Westminster Central Library and there are yearly indexes which cover film reviews.

Let us assume that the student is dealing with the work of someone who has died. A check on the people who worked with him or her may reveal that some of them are still active in the industry and may be traced either through the company they work for or through some Film Centre which is likely to know of their whereabouts.

And here a note of warning must be issued. It is most important that the utmost delicacy and tact be observed in approaching someone for information about their activities in the past. Many a great star of yesterday is to-day eking out a bare existence. Their past may be a burden to them in their daily struggle. It may be the last thing they want to talk about. The intense and often neurotic personality of the actor may be withdrawn and uncooperative and even hostile. That glamorous career that you know about may contain much that you do not know—pain, frustration and great bitterness. A false start and you may have closed a source of knowledge for ever. Enquiries should be tactful and considerate and it indeed demands much knowledge of human

psychology to know what to ask and when. In any case if the student has not got this appreciation of the human factor he is not qualified for the job he is doing.

Very often the source of possible information may be perfectly charming, most sympathetic and quite uninformative. Great artists and particularly actors may often be very unintelligent people. It must not be overlooked too that they may be quite unpleasant people.

Where information is collected from a colleague of the subject of study it must be weighed carefully in the light of the personality giving it. Facts must be checked and double-checked and possible bias allowed for. There is a baffling Pirandellian gremlin that pursues the biographers which causes the personality of the subject to change constantly under the shifting lights of human associations.

The public personality of a film-maker may be easy to assess and his achievements readily documented, but the story will not be complete in human terms without the early and later passages of his story. Here local organisations, School Associations and other sources very remote from his field of activity may prove surprisingly helpful.

It should encourage the research student to be told that more often than not one successfully handled source of information can lead to several other clues in the essentially jigsaw nature of such research.

The courtesy of research too demands that where material has been loaned—and this is nearly always of great personal value and often of considerable intrinsic value—it should be kept for a minimum time and returned in good condition and every possible precaution be taken for its safe return to the owner.

In the course of any research many interesting contacts are bound to be made, and it is also desirable that full international co-operation should be pursued. Individuals and organisations may have accumulated information covering aspects of the research and certainly no possible source should be overlooked. How these contacts are made depends very much on the individual.

To my knowledge there is only one magazine in the world which caters for those interested in the past history of the Cinema and that is *Films in Review*. Through the articles and correspondence in columns a lively interest is maintained in aspects of the Cinema scarcely touched on elsewhere. It is a source of enquiry and stimulus.

Writers on the history of the Cinema as devoted as Georges Sadoul, René Jeanne or Charles Ford are almost attempting the impossible. Under present conditions they must skate over the innest of ice if they are to avoid inaccuracy. But a hundred skillful research workers patiently delving, assessing, and presenting the detailed careers of one hundred film-makers in the same way that Marie Seton has presented Eisenstein, would have laid the foundations for a Sadoul of the future.

BOOK REVIEWS

Histoire Encyclopédique du Cinéma by René Jeanne and Charles Ford. Volume I *Le Cinéma Français 1895-1929*, Paris : Robert Laffont, 1947. 518 pp. Volume II *Le Cinéma Muet (suite) Europe (sauf France), Amérique (sauf U.S.A.), Afrique, Asie 1895-1929*. Paris : S.E.D.E., 1952. 569 pp. Volume III *Le Cinéma Américain 1895-1945*, Paris : S.E.D.E., 1955. 614 pp. Volume IV *Le Cinéma Parlant (1929-1945, sauf U.S.A.)*. Paris : S.E.D.E., 1958. 573 pp. 2,800 francs per volume.

Jeanne and Ford are careful to point out that they have not attempted to compile an encyclopaedia of the cinema where you can check minute details as to who did what and when. Whether or not you consider their work to be of major importance depend upon what you expect of a "history." A chronology of facts? An interpretation of significant facts?

Some day, I suppose, a world encyclopaedia of the cinema will exist, where even the most minor of bit-part players will have his career fully and accurately chronicled. And very useful it will be, too, as secondary research material for the real history of the cinema : that is, the interpretation and correlation of the facts to reveal the value and meaning of the events that have taken place. In 1919 alone, as Jeanne and Ford state, 1,132 films were shown on the French screens. Each one is a fact, but very few of them have any real bearing on the history of the cinema and its development. For this is their standpoint—an excitement in the growth of the cinema as an art form. It is the Inces, the Sjöströms, the Stroheim, the Dulacs, who are their quarry, viewed carefully in the more pedestrian surroundings from which they emerge. Unlike Rachael Lowne in her splendidly documented *History of the British Film*, they are not concerned to chronicle all the known facts. At the close of their own very fair summary of the British cinema to 1929, for example (which gives full credit to the Brighton school, but perhaps underestimates Hepworth), Jeanne and Ford comment that the tableau is incomplete, but one which "risquerait fort d'être fastidieux à vouloir se prolonger." The rest is facts, but not primary facts. Unlike Kracauer, again, Jeanne and Ford do not use their interpretation of the facts to illustrate a particular sociological (or even artistic) thesis. They have no axe to grind, no wish to prove that any particular school of films was possessed of the truth : they are open to receive anything whatsoever which might be considered to have extended the vocabulary of the cinema in any way.

Bardèche and Brasillach, of course, selected only those highspots which appealed to their highly idiosyncratic taste. Their mistrust of anything which appeared "highbrow" caused them to toss Buñuel and Delluc casually aside, while their dislike of Griffith's Dickensian sentimentality blinded them to his extraordinary qualities as a director. Jeanne and Ford, on the other hand, have a fantastic catholicity of taste matched by a faultless sureness of response to the cinema. Their undertaking in this history is not so very different from that of Sadoul's *Histoire Générale* (roughly contemporaneous but not yet completed), with one important difference. Jeanne and Ford are the perfect guide : one reads page after page, delighted in finding one's standards confirmed, the right films praised—allowing, of course, for minor divergences here and there caused by personal

preference (interestingly, for example, the enchanting *Our Hospitality* is cited as Keaton's masterpiece: it is not difficult to see why, for the very perfection of Keaton's comedy technique in *The General* tends to gloss over the warmth and humanity to be found so richly in *Our Hospitality*). One rarely comes across suspect judgments such as Sadoul's praise of Feuillade's *La vie telle qu'elle fut* series (obviously because they deal with social topics; true, but they were bad films), or his defence of Sarah Bernhardt's films on the ground that they show the art of a great stage actress (also true, but nothing to do with the cinema). Compare Jeanne and Ford's brilliant handling of De Mille's *The Cheat* and the importance of Sessue Hayakawa's performance in the history of screen acting, with Sadoul's dismissal, merely remarking that the French were rather struck by the performance. Or, more seriously, place Jeanne and Ford's analysis of Sjöström's *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness* beside Sadoul's laconic appraisal of it as "presque grotesque."

Fully aware that a great director like Sjöström, for example, does not spring up out of nothing, Jeanne and Ford have taken great pains to fill in the background. Copious details, often in footnotes so as not to impede the sweep of the narrative, are set down, blocking in the routine surroundings against which the more important directors grew and matured: industrial set-ups, finance, back-work done by their colleagues, and so on. Each country is dealt with separately as its production became the centre of world attention. The result is an extraordinarily clear picture of the growth of a particular national movement, its decline, and suppression by another country, absorbing and utilising all that the first had discovered and created. From France and Méliès to Italy and the spectaculars, to America, to Sweden, back to France via Germany, and so on.

Jeanne and Ford are, of course, Frenchmen, and tend naturally enough to see things from a French standpoint, and their sections on France could hardly be bettered. Occasionally, however, their right prejudice leads to nationalistic absurdities, such as the attempt

to trace the origin of Murnau's *Nosferatu* beyond the accepted literary source in Bram Stoker (here cited as *Braun Stoker*) to a story by Balzac (why not further back to Polidori and England . . . ?); or the slightly piqued suggestion that *Stagecoach* owes its quality to Maupassant's story, *Boule de Suif*. What might arguably be called the Great Period of the French cinema from 1919-1925 (Gance, Dulac, Delluc, L'Herbier, Epstein, etc.), receives full and loving treatment, and it is good to see justice being done to such "lone wolves" as Léon Poirier's frequently neglected *La Brière*, and Robert Boudrioz' *L'Atre*. With the understanding shown here, one might have hoped for more than the respectful passing acknowledgment paid to other, foreign, lone wolves: King's *Tol'able David* and Kuleshov's *Expiation*, for example. Possibly, however, to take a charitable view, one may here be up against the problem of films not seen by the authors. Less excusable is the very rapid skimming over the period from 1939-1945 (except for France). *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *All That Money Can Buy* to me only three examples, are omitted entirely, while Humphrey Bogart's films are merely accorded a mention. While one would like the authors to linger over minor delights—Preston Sturges, for example—it is difficult to quarrel with their rapid but very passing over such directors, who had, after all, little influence on the growth of the cinema.

At the end of the second volume, completing the history to 1920, are appended biographies of film personalities of the silent cinema (excluding America). These are not complete, being intended simply as a guide to principal achievements. A fifth volume is evidently in preparation which will include American biographies, and which will bring them up to date, or at least to 1945, where the history stops. It is to be hoped that the many minor inaccuracies will not be continued. Dates are not always given, and in the case of Dovzhenko, for example, in an apparently chronological list the placing of *Arsenal* (1928-9) before *The Diplomatic Pouch* (1927) is misleading. Again, Pudovkin is listed as the scenarist of *Hammer and Sickle*; while he acted in this film, and assisted in various capacities, he does not appear to have had a hand in the script. Elsewhere, Emlyn Williams is stated to have taken over Donald Crisp's role in the remake of *Broken Blossoms*; he played, of course, Barthelmess' part. Such inaccuracies do not detract from the main sweep of the text, but they are a blemish on an otherwise extremely valuable work. All four volumes also suffer from the abundance of misspellings and printing errors which seem to be de rigueur in any French book involving the use of foreign words or names. As with Sadoul, these errors are too numerous to list, running into many hundreds. Suffice it to mention an amusing title, *Yellow Shocking*, an engaging Crazy Gang of "Nervo, Flanagan and Naughton," and an inexcusable reference to Cocteau's film as "*Le Sang du Poète*."

A final grievance. It is sad to find Vigo, while sympathetically treated, once again summed up with, "*A cela se réduit l'œuvre de Jean Vigo.*" Anyone who has "only" made *L'Atalante* and *Zéro de Conduite* has lived a major cinematic life.

TOM MILNE

Ingmar Bergman et ses Films by Jean Bérenger. Paris : Le Terrain Vague, 1959. 106 pp. and 40 plates. 990 francs.

Ingmar Bergman is the latest God of the critics. The popular success of his rich streamlined comedy-intrigue *Smiles of a Summer Night* followed by the impact of his contemporary morality play *The Seventh Seal*, has led to retrospective appearances of most of his total output. Undoubtedly he occupies a unique position in the cinema of to-day because of his uncompromising attitude as film-maker and because of the degree of freedom he possesses within the framework of the Swedish Film Industry.

M. Jean Bérenger has been his advocate and interpreter in France. He has visited him in Sweden and has been accorded generous interviews. Out of all this enthusiasm he has compiled a book, which while it may please the aficionado because of its assembly of facts, will nevertheless irritate the general reader because of its scrappiness and its woolly pretentiousness, an unhappy heritage of French film writing from the days of l'Herbier and Gance.

The book opens with two essays, the first establishing Bergman as the spokesman of a generation which has sipped full of horrors, the second dealing with his all-embracing virtuosity.

Then comes a compendium of the Master's opinions on such subjects as Nostalgia for Childhood, the Conjugal Hell, the Loli-

Complex, Homosexuality, Maternity, the Police, etc. Unfortunately the texts removed from the films make rather dull reading.

Discussions with Bergman and some Swedish critics prove more revealing. We learn for example that Bergman prefers *Sommarlek* to any other of his films. He talks more of Sjöström as a vital force in films although the comedies of Stiller bear a greater resemblance to his own work. Again Bergman denies any influence from Renoir. His admiration for Jean Cocteau is based entirely on the latter's essentially theatrical talent. He distinguishes the difference between the German and Swedish temperaments. Finally he talks of his mission as a Swedish film-maker and of his incessant search for themes which will interest him.

For good measure there are biographical summaries and credit lists of his collaborators and numerous asides on aspects of the Swedish film industry.

The format of the book is clumsy and does not make for easy handling where so much text is involved, and the lay-out of the thirty-two full-page illustrations from the films and of Bergman's work does not use the space available in the best way.

But it will serve as a stop-gap until a more considered work appears on this interesting if somewhat over-rated director.

LIAM O'LAOGHAIRE.

Freiwillige Selbskontrolle der Filmwirtschaft und das Zensurverbot des Grundgesetzes by Johanne Noltenius. Göttingen: Verlag Otto Schwartz & Co., 1958. 154 pp. 25s. ("The Voluntary Self-regulation of the Film Industry and the Constitutional Prohibition of Censorship") Göttinger Rechtswissenschaftliche Studien, band 23.

This thesis is, with the one of Bruno Knapp (1955), as far as we can see, the most recent analysis of the legal position of self-regulation in the motion-picture industry. It is largely concerned to review the history of theatre and film censorship in Germany since the middle of the last century. To understand this part of the book, the English reader should be reminded of some details of continental public law. Continental administration is by tradition endowed with executive and regulative power, which in the course of time becomes restricted by formal legislation and subjected to judicial control, mostly by special administrative tribunals. "Police" in Prussia up to 1851 a very general formula for administrative intervention and supervision of private activities, and it allowed unlimited intervention in the interest of what was deemed to be governmental welfare policy. After 1848 police prerogative was understood to be limited to matters of public order and security, and literary censorship was abolished. Nevertheless in practice theatre censorship persisted under a broad interpretation of police powers. After 1848 another peculiar feature of German public law is to be considered. Constitution begins to be paramount over statute, and from 1925 on German tribunals claim control of statute law with reference to the constitution. But from 1920 films were under a special law which enunciated particular standards instead of the "general order and security" clause of police prerogative. Miss

Noltenius illustrates the practice of theatre and film censorship before and after 1920 by some causes célèbres.

The actual system is described as to organization, standards and sanction. The prohibition of any censorship is laid down in Art. 5 para. 1 subpara. 3 of the Fundamental Law of the Federal Republic. Although the self-regulation is a voluntary one and not imposed or controlled by State authority Miss Noltenius considers it to be an effective censorship, because the industry has built up a complete and working system of sanctions which bars any non-controlled films from reaching the public. As the constitutional prohibition of censorship is directed not only against administrative intervention, but also against private intervention, the so-called voluntary self-regulation is unconstitutional. Miss Noltenius is somewhat brief in this particular development, but she has rightly interpreted the trend of German public law jurisprudence, which is extending the constitutional guarantees of individual liberties against private and collective interference.

The prohibition of censorship is not mitigated by any reservation for statute, but general law may limit the freedom of expression, and laws for, e.g. youth protection, may interfere with it incidentally. Miss Noltenius shows that voluntary self-regulation is unable to eliminate action under such law, as it has no official basis and impact.

The author does not refrain from some critical remarks on what the actual voluntary self-regulation really is: the management of some business standards established by the most interested groups. And at the end she remarks that the real danger for motion pictures is not what censorship in the traditional sense would prohibit, but the steady degradation of intellectual standards by average mass movie-going.

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